



How Have New Age and Occult Practices Slipped into the Church Unnoticed?

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As we navigate the complexities of modern Christianity, it's essential to acknowledge the subtle yet pervasive influence of New Age and occult practices within our faith communities. In this era where spirituality and self-discovery are increasingly valued, the lines between Christianity and mysticism are becoming increasingly blurred. This brief article aims to explore the incorporation of mystical, New Age, or occult practices into worship, prayer, and spiritual growth, and how they are leading to syncretism and idolatry.

The Rise of New Age Spirituality

In recent years, the New Age movement has experienced a resurgence, particularly among younger generations. This shift is largely driven by a growing desire for spiritual experiences, self-discovery, and personal growth. While these pursuits may seem harmless, they often involve practices that are fundamentally at odds with biblical Christianity.

Infiltrating the Church

As Christians, we must recognize that our churches and communities are not immune to the influence of New Age and occult ideologies. The proliferation of mystical practices, such as meditation, yoga, and energy healing, has led to a blurring of the lines between Christianity and Eastern mysticism. The rise of social media has also contributed to the spread of these practices, with influencers and celebrities promoting them as a means of achieving spiritual enlightenment.

Meditation and Mindfulness

Meditation, originating from Eastern spirituality, has become widely accepted in many Christian groups. While it can be a beneficial tool for relaxation and stress management, its roots in Eastern mysticism and the associated practices can lead to a shift away from biblical teachings. Meditation, in its traditional form, is based on practices such as stillness, contemplation, and the emptying of the mind to achieve a state of enlightenment or spiritual awakening. This often involves focusing on one's breath or a mantra to quiet the mind and connect with a higher consciousness. These practices, while often presented as merely techniques for relaxation, are steeped in mysticism. They promote a form of spirituality that emphasizes personal experience and subjective feelings over objective truth. This focus on personal experience and self-discovery can subtly shift our attention away from God and His revealed truth in the Bible. As [Deuteronomy 8:11](#) warns, we must be vigilant not to forget the Lord our God, and fail to adhere to His commands, laws, and decrees.

Yoga: A Gateway to the Occult?

Yoga, a practice that has become increasingly popular in Western culture, has its roots deeply planted in Hinduism and Buddhism. While it is often promoted as a form of physical exercise and a way to cultivate mental tranquility, the spiritual dimensions of yoga are less discussed but play a crucial role in its practice. Yoga originated as a spiritual practice in ancient India, aiming to unite the practitioner's individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. This union is achieved through a series of physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana).

The asanas, or poses, in yoga are not merely physical exercises. They are, in fact, positions that are believed to open the body's energy channels, allowing the free flow of prana, or life force. This concept of manipulating energy is foreign to biblical teachings, which instead emphasize faith in God as the source of life and healing. Pranayama, the practice of controlling the breath, is believed to control the energy within the body and help the practitioner achieve a higher state of consciousness. However, the Bible teaches that our breath is the sign of life given by God, and He alone has control over it. Dhyana, or meditation, in yoga involves techniques to empty the mind, which is fundamentally different from Christian meditation. Christian meditation involves filling the mind with God's word and focusing on His character and works, while yoga encourages an emptying of the mind to achieve a state of spiritual enlightenment.

Moreover, yoga teachings often involve the belief in and pursuit of kundalini, a form of divine energy believed to reside at the base of the spine. The goal of certain yoga practices is to awaken this kundalini energy and guide it through the seven chakras, or energy centers, of the body. This belief system and practice is contrary to biblical Christianity, which teaches that the Holy Spirit is the only source of divine power and presence in a believer's life.

In essence, while the physical benefits of yoga can be advantageous, the underlying spiritual principles of yoga are rooted in Eastern mysticism and can introduce occult philosophies. As Christians, we must be aware of this and exercise discernment to avoid practices that may seemingly be benign but could lead us away from biblical truth.

Energy Healing and the Occult

Energy healing, a practice that asserts the ability to channel and balance the body's energy, is an area of growing concern. This practice is typically rooted in occult principles, drawing heavily from Eastern mysticism and the concepts of "chi" or "prana." These concepts refer to a life force or energy flow that is believed to permeate the universe and all living beings, a belief that is fundamentally alien to Christian teachings. Practitioners of energy healing often claim to manipulate this life force to restore health and wellness, using techniques such as reiki, acupuncture, or qigong. These practices involve the laying on of hands, application of pressure, or specific body movements to influence the flow of energy.

However, the Bible does not support the idea of an impersonal life force that can be manipulated by human techniques. Instead, it teaches that God is the giver and sustainer of life, and He alone has the power to heal. Therefore, attempts to control or manipulate energy can be seen as a form of idolatry, placing trust in techniques or practices rather than in God Himself.

In addition, many forms of energy healing involve elements of spiritualism and are often associated with practices such as chakra balancing or aura cleansing. These practices are rooted in belief systems that acknowledge the existence of spiritual entities or dimensions, which is a cornerstone of occultism.

As Christians, we are called to recognize our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)). This means that we should respect and care for our bodies, but it also implies that our bodies are not our own to manipulate as we see fit. They belong to God, and we should trust Him for healing and wellness, rather than resorting to practices rooted in mysticism and the occult.

The Rise of "Christian" Occultism

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in the trend of "Christian" occultism, where practitioners claim to use spiritual gifts and miracles to further the Kingdom of God. Disturbingly, there are instances where these practices seemingly incorporate the use of evil spirits, leading to grave spiritual consequences.

- **Faith Healing:** In some cases, practitioners of faith healing may unknowingly or deliberately involve evil spirits. They might claim to send spirits into or out of individuals to effect healing. This is highly problematic and contrary to biblical teachings, as only God has the authority to heal, and He does not operate through evil spirits. This practice can cause great harm, potentially opening people up to spiritual oppression or possession.
- **Prophetic Ministry:** Some individuals claiming to have a prophetic ministry may resort to using evil spirits to predict future events or give personal prophecies. This is a clear deviation from biblical prophecy, which is a direct revelation from God and not obtained through evil spirits. The Bible warns against such practices in [Deuteronomy 18:10-12](#), where it condemns divination, sorcery, and interpreting omens. This form of prophecy can lead to deception, fear, and a distorted view of God's sovereignty.
- **Spiritual Warfare:** Some individuals engaging in spiritual warfare may claim to command or manipulate evil spirits, using them to combat other spiritual forces. This practice is not only unbiblical but also extremely dangerous. It can lead to a heightened focus on demonic activity rather than on God, causing fear, confusion, and a potential opening for spiritual attacks.

These practices are deeply concerning, not only because they diverge significantly from biblical teachings, but also because they can expose individuals to spiritual deception and darkness. Practitioners may claim to be operating in the power of God, but the use of evil spirits suggests otherwise. The Bible warns us to test every spirit to see whether it is from God ([1 John 4:1](#)) and to be vigilant because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). As such, it's important for Christians to exercise discernment and to ground their faith and practice solidly in the teachings of Scripture.

Syncretism and Idolatry

The incorporation of these practices into our worship, prayer, and spiritual growth can lead to syncretism, a blending of different religious beliefs and practices. This, in turn, can result in idolatry, where we prioritize spiritual experiences and self-discovery over a deepening relationship with God. As the apostle Paul warned, *"Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"* ([Romans 12:2](#)).

The Dangers of Mysticism

Mysticism, which emphasizes personal experience and intuition over biblical truth, is another area of concern. While mysticism can provide a sense of spiritual connection, it often leads to a rejection of biblical authority and a reliance on subjective experience. As the Bible warns, *"There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death"* ([Proverbs 14:12](#)).

The Influence of Social Media

Social media has also played a significant role in the proliferation of New Age and occult practices within Christian circles. Influencers and celebrities often promote these practices as a means of achieving spiritual enlightenment, and their large followings can create a sense of legitimacy around these practices. However, as Christians, we must be cautious of the sources we trust and the information we consume.

A Call to Discernment

In these end times, it's crucial that we remain vigilant and discerning. We must recognize that the enemy of our souls is cunning and deceitful, seeking to lead us astray through subtle and seemingly innocuous means ([2 Corinthians 11:14](#)). As the Bible warns, *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).

In response to the infiltration of New Age and occult practices, we must return to the simplicity and purity of the Gospel. We must prioritize biblical truth, recognizing that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation and that Scripture is the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Conclusion

As we navigate the complexities of modern Christianity, it's essential to remain vigilant and discerning. We must recognize the subtle yet pervasive influence of New Age and occult practices within our faith communities and reject any practice that contradicts biblical truth. Let us heed the warning of Scripture, *"Test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil"* ([1 Thessalonians 5:21-22](#)). As Christians, we must take a stand against the infiltration of New Age and occult practices within our churches and communities. We must:

1. Return to biblical truth: Prioritize Scripture as the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice.
2. Be discerning: Recognize the subtle influence of New Age and occult practices and reject any practice that contradicts biblical truth.
3. Speak out: Address the infiltration of New Age and occult practices within our churches and communities, and promote biblical truth and discernment. By taking a stand against the infiltration of New Age and occult practices, we can ensure that our churches and communities remain faithful to biblical Christianity and that we continue to glorify God in all we do.

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